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Fax Cover Sheet

Date: 21 Jul 2003

To: Aslam Jaffery	From: Rebecca M Bachner
Application/Control Number: 09/503,960	Art Unit: 3623
Fax No.: 303-740-6962	Phone No.: 703-305-1872
Voice No.: 303-740-1980	Return Fax No.: 703-746-7239
Re: Advisory Office Action	CC:

☐ **Urgent** ☐ **For Review** ☐ **For Comment** ☐ **For Reply** ☒ **Per Your Request**

Comments:

Attached is an unofficial copy of the Advisory Office Action mailed July 18, 2002.

Number of pages 4 including this page

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Advisory Action

1. The applicant's amendments have not been entered as they raise new issues that would require further search and consideration. The applicant narrows claim 5 as the goods or services are now limited to previously traded goods or services. Further, in claims 7 and 8, the applicant narrowed the type of relationship between the users. The claims now read that the relationship between the users is one of sponsorship. Therefore, the amended claims will not be entered.

2. The applicant argues that Epinions.com and Scharber do not teach deriving a community rating for a particular user.

However, together Epinions.com and Scharber do teach deriving a community rating for a particular user. Scharber discloses a community rating based upon the users. Scharber teaches that the virtual community is given a rating in the abstract and column 4, lines 43-63. If the community is given a particular rating, then each user in that community would have that community rating. (For example, if the '3As' group was given a 6 and Alex, Amanda, and Alice, were part of that group, then Alex would have a 6 as his community rating).

As the examiner stated in the Final Office Action, Scharber does not explicitly disclose how or any specific function used to derive the community rating. However, the rating must be created in some way for the rating to mean anything. For example, if

one was given the rating 5, 5 would only be meaningful if one knew what the highest or lowest rating available to the group. The rating of 5 would be meaningless if it was arbitrary and there was no criteria to arrive at the number. Therefore, it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to perform a function to derive a community rating as this would be an efficient and accurate way to create a rating for the community.

Furthermore, Scharber in combination with Epinions.com teaches deriving a community rating for a particular user. As Epinions.com already teaches establishing ratings for the users and a community through the web of trust, these user ratings can be combined to create the group rating discussed in Scharber. When combining the two references it would be obvious that the individual rating would effect or help create the community rating. Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Epinions.com to include a community rating as it would allow an outside user (a user not in that community or web of trust) to quickly determine the reputation of those group of users in the web of trust. Thus, a reputation is formed, and an outsider can quickly assess and form an opinion about all the users in the particular community.

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3. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Rebecca Bachner** whose telephone number is 703-305-1872. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday from 8:30am to 5:00pm. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, **Tariq Hafiz** can be reached on **(703) 305-9643**.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the **Receptionist** whose telephone number is **(703) 308-1113**.

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

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or faxed to:

(703) 305-7687 Official communications; including After Final
communications labeled "Box AF"

(703) 746-7306 Informal/Draft communications, labeled "DRAFT"

Hand delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park 5, 2451 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA, 7th floor receptionist.

RMB
July 15, 2000